

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6735

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL MEDAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 2285

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS ID PO PT

SUBJ: ANTARA REPORT ON "LEFTIST TERROR" IN
PORTUGUESE TIMOR

BEGIN SUMMARY: OFFICIAL GOI NEWS BULLETIN ANTARA
REPORTED FEB 24 THAT LEFTIST THREATS AND TERROR IN
PORTUGUESE TIMOR BY PRO-INDEPENDENCE FRETILIN GROUP,
WITH SUPPORT OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR AUTHORITIES, HAVE
CREATED A SITUATION "EVIDENTLY LEADING TO ABSOLUTE
POWER TAKE-OVER BY COMMUNISTS." ARTICLE SAID GOVERNOR
OF COLONY RECENTLY AUTHORIZED FRETILIN TO BUY ARMS;
THAT "LEFTIST" GROUPS HAVE "PRACTICALLY TAKEN OVER
DE FACTO AUTHORITY; AND THAT MOUNTING TENSIONS HAVE
CAUSED FLOW OF REFUGEES TO INDONESAN TIMOR.
THIS REPORT --WITH ITS LURID AND ALMOST CERTAINLY
HIGHLY DISTORTED DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNIST/LEFTIST
ACTIVITIES--IS OBVIOUSLY GOI PROPAGANDA. IT COULD BE
PART OF CAMPAIGN TO PROVIDE PRETEXT FOR SOME KIND OF UNI-
LATERAL ACTION BY GOI TO ASSURE MERGER OF TERRITORY
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INTO INDONESIA. END SUMMARY END CONFIDENTIAL

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. ANATAR AREPORT, DATELINED FEB 23 FROM ATAMBUA (TOWN ON INDONESIA/PORTUGUESE TIMOR BORDER) SAID APPROXIMATELY 300 POLITICAL REFUGEES HAVE CROSSED BORDER TO ESCAPE LEFTIST INTIMIDATIONS IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR. EXODUS, WHICH BEGAN IN JANUARY, WAS SAID TO HAVE INCREASED IN RECENT WEEKS; AND REFUGEES ARE ENTERING INDONESIA AT BORDER CHECK POINTS AROUND ATAMBUA, NENEK, MOTSAIN AND OTHER

LOCALITIES. TENSION IS MOUNTING IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR AND "DE FACTO AUTHORITY HAS PRACTICALLY BEEN TAKENOVER BY LEFTIST GROUPS" ARTICLE SAID.

2. PREPORT SAID CITIZENS IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR--ESPECIALLY LEADERS OF APODETI PARTY WHICH SUPPORTS MERGER WITH INDONESIA--HAVE BEEN TRAGETS OF AGITATION, PROPAGANDA AND "ON MANY OCCASIONS", TERROR.

3. AS EXAMPLE OF INTIMIDATION, ANTARA DESCRIBED CASE OF A PORTUGUESE CITIZEN, ALBINO DOS SANTOS BRANDAO, CHIEF OF ZUMALAI SUB-REGENCY, ZWAI REGENCY WHO WAS FORCED TO FLEE TO INDONESIA AT END OF JANUARY. ARTICLE SAID BRANDAO HAD ASKED HIGHER AUTHORITIES TO STOP PRESSURES BY FRETILIN, WHICH HAS NO SUPPORTERS IN THE AREA, AND FLED WHEN REQUEST WAS IGNORED AND FRETILIN PEOPLE THREATENED TO KILL HIM. BRANDAO SAID TO BE IN AUSTRALIA NOW, BUT HIS WIFE--ATIMORESE--AND CHILDREN ARE STILL IN DILI.

4. REFUGEE SOURCES CITED IN ARTICLE REPORTEDLY SAID THE 2,000 MEMBER PORTUGUESE TIMOR SECURITY FORCE WHICH IS COMPOSED MAINLY OF PORTUGUESE ARMED FORCES IS "OPENLY IN FAVOR OF LEFTIST GROUPS." LEADERS OF SECURITY FORCE WERE DESCRIBED AS SMALL GROUP OF OFFICERS WITH LEFTIST LEANINGS "IN LINE WITH DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES IN PORTUGAL." (ACCORDING TO ANTARA EDITOR'S NOTE, THESE OFFICERS RECENTLY ESTABLISHED THE "KOMISI SERAN TIMOR," SERSAN (SERGEANT) BEING THE HIGHEST RANK ACCORDING TO NATIVE TIMORESE, AND THAT ELEVEN OF THE TWELVE MEMBERS CONFIDENTIAL

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OF THE COMMISSION ARE FRETILIN MEMBERS).

5. ARTICLE CONCLUDES THAT PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES IN CAPITAL OF DILI "DO NOT OBJECT TO GRANTING FACILITIES" TO COMMUNISTS, NOTING FOR EXAMPLE THAT GOVERNOR HAS RECENTLY ISSUED AU PERMIT AUTHORIZING FRETILIN TO BUY ARMS; AND THAT SITUATION IS EVIDENTLY LEADING TO AN ABSOLUTE TAKE-OVER BY THE COMMUNISTS. END UNCLASSIFIED

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6. COMMENT: ANTARA ARTICLE--WITH ITS SENSATIONAL AND ALMOST CERTAINLY HIGHLY DISTORTED ACCOUNT OF RAPANT COMMUNIT/LEFTIST TERROR AND INTIMIDATION AND VIRTUAL CONTROL OF PORTUGUESE TIMOR BY LEFTIST APPEARS TO BE A BLATANT PROPAGANDA EXERCISE BY GOI. PURPOSE IS TO SUPPORT GOI CLAIM THAT PRO INDEPENDENCE FORCES, INCLUDING FRETRELIN, ARE COMMUNISTS INTENT ON SEIZING POWER BY FORCE AND INTIMIDATION. ARTICLE MAY ALSO BE BEGINNING OF CAMPAIGN TO PROVIDE PRETEXT FOR OVERT OR COVERT UNILATERAL MILITARY OR PARAMILITARY ACTION BY GOI IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR TO ASSURE MERGER INTO INDONESIA.

7. SURABAYA MAY WISH TO MAKE FURTHER COMMENT.
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